**Ancient China Study Guide**

**1. Describe the geography of China and explain how the geography aided in making Ancient China a successful civilization. Most of Ancient China developed in the Yangtze and Huang He River valleys. The land was rich and fertile which helped with success in farming. They were surrounded by barriers such as the Gobi and Taklimakan Deserts, The Yellow, South China and East China Seas, and the Himalaya Mountains which blocked their ability to expand and communicate outside of their territory. These barriers also protected them to some extent, from invasion.**

**2. Describe where Ancient China was located and how the location/territory of China has changed.**

**Ancient China was located in the Eastern part of Asia. China’s territory has since expanded north, south and west.**

**3. What geographic barriers surrounded Ancient China? Specifically note which barriers block China from other countries.**

**They were surrounded by barriers such as the Gobi (blocking them from Mongolia) and Taklimakan Deserts, The Yellow, South China and East China Seas, and the Himalaya Mountains (separating them from India) which blocked their ability to expand and communicate outside of their territory. These barriers also protected them to some extent, from invasion.**

**4. How did the Huang He River help and hinder Ancient Chinese civilization? Why is it referred to as the River of Sorrow?**

**It provided fresh water and fertile soil which helped with agriculture. It also flooded and caused destruction which led to the nickname of the River of Sorrow.**

**5. What was the Silk Road and how did it aid in the economic success of Ancient China? The Silk Road connected China with other civilizations to the west. It opened up new markets for ancient China to trade their silk with. This led to economic success since they were the only civilization that knew how to create silk.**

**6. What was Ancient China’s main export and how did it make them economically successful? What did they trade this export for and with whom (who were their trading partners)?**

**Silk was China’s main export. China kept the secret for how to create this highly sought after textile. People wanted it and they traded away goods such as; gold, oil, furs, animals… Trading partners included, India, South Asia, Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East**

**7. Other than goods, what was exchanged and spread along the Silk Road? What is this an example of? Culture was also shared on the Silk Road. In particular, the spread of Buddhism is credited with trade on the Silk Road. This is an example of cultural diffusion**

**8. What were the major accomplishments in each of the four dynasties (Shang, Chou, Qin, Han)**

**#8 Shang Dynasty- writing system, bronze weapons  
Han- irrigation, paper, and iron plows  
Qin- Legalism, laws, money, weights, measurement  
Chou( Zhou)- Confucianism, feudalism, Mandate of Heaven**

**9. Where did the Han position their capital city? Why would they have chosen this location? The Han positioned their capital city, Chang’an, near the Silk Road. They positioned it here so that they could benefit from the trading that occurred along the Silk Road.**

**10. Explain the “Mandate of Heaven.” What other civilization held similar beliefs? What were those beliefs? The authority to rule came from Heaven and this authority could be lost, regardless of family/heredity if you did not live a virtuous life. This is similar to the thinking that the pharaohs (in Egypt) gained their power from the gods. This idea also is said to have influenced the “Divine Right of the Kings” that later surfaced in Europe.**

**11. What challenges would a trader on the Silk Road face? \*harsh travel conditions, threat of theft from bandits, sand storms, wild animals, lack of supplies…**

**12. What was the purpose of the Great Wall of China? To protect China from invasion from the north (modern day Mongolia).**

**13. Which dynasty followed Confucian teachings? Explain briefly the teachings of Confucius.**

**The Han Dynasty followed Confucianism. Confucius taught that society should follow a hierarchy of family. The father is the head of the family and should be respected by all. There are 5 relationships that reflect the hierarchy. 1. King to subject 2. Father to son 3. Husband to wife 4. Older brother to younger brother 5. Friend to Friend.**

**14. Which dynasty was first in Ancient China?**

**Shang**

**15. Describe how the natural barriers of the Himalayan Mountains and the Gobi Desert hindered and benefited the people of Ancient China.**

**They benefited China by protecting them from invaders. They hindered them by preventing expansion of China.**

**16. What natural formation blocked China’s expansion into Mongolia?**

**Gobi Desert**

**17. What natural barrier separates China and India?**

**Himalayan Mountains**

**18. What were some innovations from Ancient China? How did this benefit the people?**

**Seismograph- while our current seismographs look different, we still use machines to detect the epicenter of an earthquake.**

**Magnetic Compass- this would have helped merchants as they traveled to trade goods, just as we still use devices to help us navigate the world.**

**19. What group of people most contributed to the spread of Buddhism from India to China?**

**Traders**

**20. Buddhism is based on the life and teachings of whom? Describe his journey to  
become the Enlightened One.**

**Siddhartha Gautama was a Hindu prince that wanted to end suffering he saw. He left his kingdom and went on a search to find the answers to end suffering. There he had an awakening and became the Buddha or the Enlightened One. He spread his teachings and beliefs of Buddhism to India which spread into China through the Silk Road.**